

CLERK'S OFFICE U.S. DISTRICT COURT
AT ABINGDON, VA
FILED

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

IAN 9 2024

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
Western District of Virginia

LAURA A. AUSTIN, CLERK
BY: *Ally Borduine*
DEPUTY CLERK

United States of America
v.
AUSTIN HALE

) Case No. 1:24-mj-3
)
)
)
)
)

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of January 8, 2024 in the county of Scott in the
Western District of Virginia, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section
18 U.S.C. 875 (c)

Offense Description

Whoever transmits in interstate or foreign commerce any communication
containing any threat to kidnap any person or any threat to injure the person
of another.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attached Affidavit

Continued on the attached sheet.

Chad Potter
Complainant's signature

Special Agent Chad Potter

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

telephonically

Date: 01/09/2024

Pamela Meade Sargent
Judge's signature

City and state: Abingdon, VA

U.S. Magistrate Judge Pamela Meade Sargent

Printed name and title

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION
FOR A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, Chad Potter, being first duly sworn, do hereby depose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). I have been employed as an FBI Special Agent since October 27, 2019. I received my initial training and instruction at the FBI Academy located in Quantico, Virginia, where I received training regarding violations of the United States criminal statutes. After my initial training, I was assigned to the Richmond Division, Bristol Resident Agency of the FBI. I currently work out of the Bristol, Virginia FBI Field Office. As part of my job duties, I have investigated a variety of criminal cases, including cases involving the possession of child pornography and sexual exploitation of children, public corruption, civil rights violations, domestic terrorism, and financial crimes.

2. As a Special Agent, I am “an investigative or law enforcement officer” of the United States within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3052, which specifically authorizes FBI Special Agents, and officials of the FBI, to make arrests, carry firearms, and serve warrants. Title 18, United States Code, Section 3107, empowers FBI Special Agents and officials to make seizures under warrant for violation of federal statutes.

2. I am investigating the activities of AUSIN L. HALE (HALE). As will be shown below, there is probable cause to believe that HALE violated Title 18, United States Code, Sections 875, whoever transmits in interstate or foreign commerce any communication containing any threat to kidnap any person or any threat to injure the person of another. I submit this application and affidavit in support of an arrest warrant for HALE.

3. The statements in this affidavit are based on information obtained from my observations and investigation, as well as information that I learned from discussions with other law enforcement officers. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing an arrest warrant, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause for the requested arrest warrant.

4. On January 9, 2023, Woodridge Hospital staff notified the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Johnson City Resident Agency that they had received a threatening communication on their Balladhealth.org Contact Us page on January 8, 2023.

5. Woodridge Hospital is located at 403 N State of Franklin Rd, Johnson City, TN 37604.

6. The threat stated: "I'm gonna walk in to your hospital and shoot the staff for what you did to me and my family." The identifying sections of the

Contact us page were filled in as follows: Name- Austin Hale, Email- austin2145hale@gmail.com, Phone- (703) 239-7995

7. Queries of FBI databases revealed an Etip submitted by Austin Hale with an address of 1124 Hilton Road, Gate City, VA 24251.
8. On January 9, 2023, this agent interviewed HALE at his residence located at 1124 Hilton Road, Gate City, VA 24251.
9. This agent asked HALE if he knew why the FBI would be there to talk with HALE. HALE said, "Probably because I sent the death threat to the hospital." This agent asked HALE what method HALE used to send the threatening communication. HALE accessed the internet with his desktop computer and sent the threatening communication to the hospital's website, balladhealth.org/contact. The desktop computer is located in HALE's house located at 1124 Hilton Road, Gate City, VA 24251. 1124 Hilton Road, Gate City, VA 24251 is located in the Western District of Virginia.
10. HALE said he sent the threatening communication because HALE was upset with the hospital. HALE stated, "They made my balls hurt by shocking my cock."



Chad Potter, Special Agent

Federal Bureau of Investigation

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED TO BEFORE ME *telephonically*
THIS DAY 09 OF JANUARY 2024.

Pamela Meade Sargent
HONORABLE JUDGE PAMELA MEADE SARGENT
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA